UNLIMITED TRAINING

By ADMIRAL SANKICHI TAKAHASHI

From Pearl Harbor to the Solomons, the Japanese Navy has had a long series of extraordinary successes which have forced admiration even from her enemies. The Japanese Navy achieved these successes in spite of the fact that until recently it was severely handicapped by the Washington Naval Agreement, which accorded it only thirty per cent of the size of the combined Anglo-American Fleets. Japan, however, has found the secret of compensating for lack in quantity by high quality. How this has been accomplished and the price that had to be paid for it is told in the following article.

Admiral Takahashi, whose photograph will be found on page 30, is one of the outstanding Japanese naval commanders of our age. He has held the positions of Chief of Staff of the Combined Fleet, President of the Naval Staff College, Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff, Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet, and Supreme War Councilor.—K.M.

AFTER the German Far Eastern Squadron had, at the beginning of the first World War, wiped out a British squadron off Coronel, the Japanese Navy replaced the British Navy in the defense of almost all parts of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Leaving only a few cruisers in the Indian Ocean, the British Navy was able to concentrate all its strength around Europe. In addition to this, Japan, upon request of Great Britain, organized a fleet consisting mainly of destroyers and despatched it to the Mediterranean. With Malta as its base, this fleet played an active role at the side of the Allies. A Japanese fleet which took charge of the Pacific and Indian Oceans conducted joint operations with the British Navy, with Singapore as the base. At that time, I myself served as a member of the General Staff of the Japanese Fleet in Singapore.

When the war had been won by the Allies with Japan's aid, Japan expected the Anglo-American powers, which had witnessed Japan's strength, to accord her the treatment of an equal. Yet, although Japan was supported in her attitude by Italy, France, and several other countries, Britain and the United States raised strong objections. It was at their suggestion that the Washington Conference was held.

"THREE COURTESIES"

Japan, Britain, the United States, France, and Italy participated in the conference. In view of the assistance rendered by Japan in the Great War, the Anglo-American camp should have appreciated the co-operation of the Japanese Navy. But Britain and the United States repaid these services with what we have called the "three courtesies."

The first of these was the request to return Tsingtao to China. At the Washington Conference, the Chinese delegates treated Japan as though she were a defendant and used abusive language against her. Britain and the United States adopted the attitude of judges and requested the return of Tsingtao to China. This question was, after all, one which concerned only Japan and China and in which Britain and the United States had no right to interfere. Although the entire Japanese nation should have been offended by this arbitrary attitude, there were at

that time many people in Japan who were so lacking in spirit as to approve the return of Tsingtao, out of a feeling of submission towards Britain and the United States.

The return of Tsingtao to China resulted in new unrest in East Asia. China reasoned as follows: "Although Japan adopts a strong attitude towards China, she will always give way to pressure on the part of Britain and the United States." China began to plan driving the Japanese out of Manchuria, and the Manchurian Incident occurred. I think the reason why the Chiang Kai-shek regime is continuing its useless resistance is that it is still possessed by the false idea that Japan will necessarily succumb if Britain and the United States continue to side with China. In this respect, the Washington Conference contributed its share towards making China reject Japan's overtures.

"OPEN DOOR" AND 5:5:3

The second "courtesy" of the Washington Conference was the abandonment of the Japanese-British alliance. For Britain, this alliance had been of immense value during the Great War. After the war, however, Britain saw no advantage in it and, moreover, the United States was against it. So Britain discarded the alliance like an old pair of shoes. In its place, the Anglo-Americans set up the Nine Power Pact, which guaranteed what they called the "territorial integrity and administrative independence" of China and the principle of the "Open Door." This pact aimed at tying Japan's hands in the Orient. It furnished the USA with countless pretexts for condemning Japan as the violator of treaty obligations. However, it was impossible for Japan to live up to the treaty. The times were changing, but Britain and the United States disregarded this and tried to fetter Japan by the Nine Power Pact to the *status quo*.

The third "courtesy" of the Washington Conference was the naval armament limitation. For Britain and the United States, the Japanese Navy had been extremely valuable during the Great War. Yet they had no desire to see the Japanese Navy grow too strong. So, after making previous arrangements between themselves for assuring their own equality of naval power, Britain and the United States invited Japan, Italy, and France to the conference and requested Japan to accept the 5:5:3 ratio for the fleets of Great Britain, America, and Japan. The Japanese Navy was extremely indignant. From the very beginning, we all believed that it was impossible for an independent nation to agree to possessing any force inferior to that of Britain or the United States. However, after a series of discussions, the authorities of the Japanese Navy presented a plan demanding 70 instead of 60 per cent of the United States naval strength. But Britain and the United States continued to insist on the reduction to 60 per cent. Eventually it was agreed that Japan should possess 60 per cent of the American or 30 per cent of the combined Anglo-American naval strength in capital ships and aircraft carriers.

JAPANESE REACTION

While we officers and men of the Navy showed resentment at this, public opinion at that time was not in perfect accord with the opinion of the Navy. Some quarters drew comparisons between Japan and the United States in such things as the wealth, productive power, and size of the two countries, or even as regards the buildings of New York and Tokyo, concluding that Japan had only 20 to 30 per cent of all the possessions of the United States. Moreover, it is said that there were Japanese, not only inside Japan but even in the United States, who uttered such opinions. There were also certain people who thought that Japan would cease to exist if she made an enemy of Britain and the United States.

At that time, Vice-Admiral Kanji Kato, President of the Naval Staff College, went to Washington. He was so indignant over the progress of the Conference that members of the Japanese delegation feared that he might commit suicide if things came to the worst. When Vice-

Admiral Kato returned to Tokyo, several of us went to the station to meet him. As soon as he alighted on the platform, he said: "We were defeated in Washington. We do not deserve your welcome." He called later on Fleet-Marshal Heihachiro Togo and in tears explained to him the details of the Washington Conference. As I was told by Vice-Admiral Ogasawara, the secretary of the late Fleet-Marshal Togo, the Fleet-Marshal listened to him for some time and finally said: "It is very regrettable that the Japanese Navy has been restricted to 60 per cent of the United States Navy in quantity, but it cannot be helped, since the nation has promised it. But there is no limitation in training, is there? Even if there is a limitation in quantity, training is unlimited." Vice-Admiral Kato was deeply moved by these words, and he took leave of the Fleet-Marshal with a lighter heart.

A BATTLE LOST

All the contracting countries of the naval armaments treaty put it into effect within two years of its conclusion. America's main contribution was to stop the construction of those warships which were on the building program; at the same time, she converted a part of her capital ships into aircraft carriers. In this way she had to sink only one or two warships. Japan stopped the construction of warships on the building program and also converted capital ships under construction into aircraft carriers. However, in addition to this and in order to lower the ratio of the capital ships to 60 per cent of that of the United States, Japan had to sink many capital ships of the second class, such as the *Katori*, *Kashima*, *Aki*, *Satsuma*, *Kurama*, *Ikoma*, *Ibuki*, *Hizen*, *Iwami*, *Sagami*, *Suo*, *Tango*, and others.

Warships are not only floating fortresses which protect the nation: they are also the homes of the officers and men of the Navy. When Japanese naval men board a warship, they are determined to defend the nation and sink the enemy's warships. If the fortune of battle is against them and their ship is sunk, they are determined to share their ship's fate in the waters of the Pacific. But in the two years after the Washington Treaty, we had ourselves to sink our beloved ships with our own artillery, torpedoes, and bombs: today the *Katori* was sunk, tomorrow would be the *Kashima's* turn! Until those ships disappeared into the waters, leaving only a whirl on the surface of the sea, the officers and men aboard the other warships saw them off. It was their farewell service, and they sent those ships off with tears in their eyes. At the table of the Washington Conference, the Japanese Fleet had fought with the Anglo-American combined fleet and had been defeated. The Japanese Navy now saw the results of this defeat in these tragic scenes.

THE 168-HOUR WEEK

While the officers and men of the Navy wept with resentment, Fleet-Marshal Togo's exhortation to what was called limitless training became deeply engraved on their hearts. They understood that the problem of quantity or number was unimportant. Even if the ratio were to be fixed at 50 or 40 or 30 per cent, it would make no difference. "We must defeat our bitter enemies Britain and the United States by every means. We must avenge the *Katori* and the *Kashima*." This was the firm determination of the naval officers and men at that time.

In 1927, Admiral Kanji Kato was Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet, and I was assigned to the post of Chief of Staff. At the beginning of that year, the Commander in Chief called all the officers to his flagship the *Nagato* and delivered an impassioned exhortation. He concluded with emphasis: "As far as the Combined Fleet is concerned, the war with the United States has already begun. The training of the fleet in the past has been severe, but from this year on we shall have a still more vigorous training. Be prepared for this. You must not let the warships collide with each other, but you can make them scrape against each other. Carry out the training with this instruction in mind!"

In order to put such a program in force, we found that the working week of "Monday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Friday," which had been the rule in the Japanese Navy since 1908, was still inadequate. In this schedule there was still time to rest at night. The difference between day and night has disappeared entirely since the beginning of the new training. Under the Commander in Chief, all members of the fleet from now on underwent all-night training. While warrant officers and men had a chance to rest whenever circumstances permitted through there being two or three shifts, there were no such shifts for senior officers, who had no men to relieve them. In this way, training and maneuvers were conducted on the basis of actual sea warfare and, as a result, the skill and fighting ability of the Navy have greatly improved. Thus, with the progress of the training, the real meaning of "limitless training" and the possibility of thereby supplementing the shortage of quantity were driven home into the minds of all.

WAR-LIKE TRAINING

While strict training bears fruit, it is liable to entail severe accidents. No one knows how many times warships were close to colliding with each other. "Look out!" we have often had to cry breathlessly. But, somehow or other, there was no major accident till the late summer of 1927. Then in the pitch-dark night of August 24 a serious accident occurred during a maneuver in the Japan Sea. A cruiser-flotilla had a head-on collision with a destroyer-flotilla. The destroyer *Warabi*, which was in the van, collided with the cruiser *Jintsu* and sank immediately. And the destroyer *Yoshi*, which followed the *Warabi*, collided with the second warship which followed the *Jintsu*. One third of the *Yoshi* was cut away at the rear. In this accident, more than 120 officers and men lost their lives in the execution of their duties.

The Navy Ministry's announcement of this disaster shocked the Japanese people, who had not much knowledge of the training of the Navy. It aroused considerable criticism of the Navy, even in the newspapers. One paper said in its editorial: "There should be a limit to the intensity of the training. Can there be any excuse for sinking a warship of His Imperial Majesty's and causing the death of many loyal officers and men?"

On the other hand, there were also many people, especially among veterans of the Navy, who sent letters of sympathy to the naval authorities. Among them was Vice-Admiral Keisaburo Moriyama. In answer, he received the following letter of thanks from the Commander in Chief:

"I must thank you for your warm sympathy and encouragement. It is as if I had gained millions of supporters. The accident was like a bolt from the blue in these times of tranquillity and peace-at-any-price atmosphere. Yet the naval authorities concerned had in their minds all been prepared for such an eventuality. In the face of danger and difficulty, the officers and men are fulfilling their duties with composure and are satisfied to sacrifice themselves in order to supplement the shortage of the 5:5:3 ratio. I wish to beg you to make further efforts towards making the public understand the heroic spirit of these officers and men, for I suppose there is no better means of consoling the spirits of more than 120 heroes. The morale of the Fleet has not been in the least affected by this great sacrifice. On the contrary, making good use of this incident, the officers and men have encouraged me and have given me further aid. Standing between my sense of responsibility for the dead and the future training of the Fleet, I cannot help weeping in my heart. I have been deeply impressed by your letter. It will be a source of great satisfaction to me if you will rest assured regarding the future of the Navy, for I am determined to do my best to protect the Imperial Navy in the face of any assailant."

IMMUTABLE POLICY

When our fleet continued its maneuvers, I asked the Commander in Chief: "It seems that the incident has become a subject of much discussion among the people. Will you continue the training as it is or will you show some discretion hereafter?"

To this, the Commander in Chief replied decisively: "Since I think that war has already broken out with the United States, I will continue this training by every possible means. I will do it as long as I possess His Imperial Majesty's confidence, regardless of whether I am criticized by the people. No matter what happens, we must defeat the United

States, so I will continue our pre-arranged training."

Vice-Admiral Moriyama recently made the following remarks in a speech entitled "Intense Training of our Navy," in which he referred to the accident of August 24, 1927:

"Although it may sound like an extreme view, we must always expect victims to fall to the risky maneuvers of the Navy. Maneuvers which do not risk the lives of the officers and men are of no use to actual war . . . . The comment of the Japanese people on this incident was most violent and of a heartless, ignorant, and irresponsible nature. Despite the fact that they were a naval nation, they not only lacked knowledge of the sea but were intoxicated by the poison of Anglo-American-made peace."

Regarding the Captain of the ill-fated *Jintsu*, Vice-Admiral Moriyama stated:

"One thing which must not be forgotten is the heroic death of Captain Keiji Mizuki, Captain of the *Jintsu*. He took the entire responsibility for this accident upon himself. After calmly awaiting the judgment of the court-martial, he returned to his home and composedly killed himself by his own hand. His was a noble character and a heroic death! It was a great sacrifice brought about by intense training."

With the carrying out of so severe a training, the fighting ability made remarkable progress. As time went on, the position of Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet was occupied by various men: Admiral Kato was followed by Admiral Taniguchi, Admiral Eisuke Yamamoto, Admiral Seizo Kobayashi, Admiral Nobumasa Suetsugu, myself, Admiral Osami Nagano, Admiral Zengo Yoshida, and Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. Yet all these successive Commanders in Chief have held fast to the belief that there can be no limit to training and that the war with the United States was already going on. Each has handed down the ideas of Admiral Kato to his successor. And the training of the Japanese Navy has increased in intensity with the years.

AIRPLANES AND MANEUVERS

As I recall my own past, I remember that in 1928 an aerial battle unit consisting of two airplane carriers and a group of destroyers was for the first time organized as part of the Combined Fleet of the Imperial Navy. I was appointed Commander of that unit and served in that capacity for two years (1928-29). At that time, Japanese airplanes were very obsolete.

When in 1929 the unit was maneuvering south of Chosen, the airplanes which had flown from the carrier got lost due to a sudden change in weather and could not find their way back. (They had discovered and attacked the enemy in the far distance and had failed to return by the time they were expected.) Soon there came a message from them: "Carrier unlocatable." They were notified of the whereabouts of the carrier, and every means was tried to make the carrier visible to the planes. But in vain. The wind blew so hard that the spray from the waves was carried twice the height of the mast of the warship. The planes reported: "Fuel for only 20 more minutes left; carrier still unlocatable; immediately notify whereabouts." The planes hurried, and the carriers hurried. Still they could not locate their carrier. "Fuel for only 10 more minutes," then, "Fuel for only 5 more minutes." After that, communications ceased. The planes had made forced landings on the sea. The majority of the crews, however, were rescued by fishing trawlers, and casualties were comparatively few. The Captain of the *Akagi* at that time was Captain Isoroku Yamamoto, now Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

Various kinds of accidents occurred after that, some of them remaining unpublished, and this is hardly the place to speak about them. While I was the Commander in Chief of the First Fleet of the Imperial Navy, for instance, a destroyer was sunk. Great damage was also sustained in a terrific hurricane. But the more strenuous the training, the more polished the technique.

"COME ON, US NAVY!"

Meanwhile, as a result of the Manchurian Incident and the China Emergency, the relations between Japan and the Anglo-American powers worsened. Throughout this period, the Japanese

Navy continued its strenuous training. This has resulted in its profound self-confidence, not a single member of it showing any hesitation when comparing the men-of-war of Japan with those of the United States. Every officer and man felt: "Come on, US Navy, drop in any time." While there was no necessity to start a war from our side, we were quite confident, each and all of us, that we would beat the US Navy without fail, should a war break out.

Well, the war actually did break out on December 8 a year ago, and the achievements since then have proved that the Imperial Navy is much stronger than even we had expected. Nobody can tell, of course, what kind of battles will still be fought; but one thing is certain and that is that the Imperial Navy will knock out the US Fleet, should it ever come.

What worries the men and officers of the Imperial Japanese forces most is, not that the ships or airplanes of the US Navy are daily increasing in numbers, but that they may never come to the Pacific. All would be well if they came; but if they do not there will be little chance of liquidating them. If they hesitate too long in coming, the Japanese Navy might even proceed to the Atlantic; we all recall the recent reports of a Japanese submarine calling at a German base and sailing from there for further activities. The sphere of activity of the Imperial Japanese Navy is not necessarily limited to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Wherever there is a sea route, the Imperial Navy will go. The fact that the navies of Japan and Germany recently shook hands, and that some German submarines came to the Indian Ocean or Japanese submarines sailed to the Atlantic, may not have brought about any concrete war results. But, as I believe, it has accomplished a great spiritual achievement by showing the close co-operation between the Axis powers.

A VISIT TO KASUMIGA-URA

Nobody can tell how long the war will last, and while it goes on there may possibly be some hardships which have to be overcome. But the whole nation, firmly believing in the certainty of victory, will do its utmost in its individual work and in the establishing of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere for fulfilling the great mission of creating the world family of nations.

The young officers and men of the Imperial Japanese Forces have risen to great heights, not only in technique but also spiritually. We thought that we did fairly well as young officers during the Russo-Japanese War; but everyone who has returned from the front today says that the young officers and men have all grown into great men.

Let me tell you an episode which moved me greatly. It took place at the aviation corps at Kasumiga-ura, where I went to inspect aerial training the other day, and it was told to me by the Commander. Not long before, a group of young officers had completed their period of training, and a send-off party for the graduating officers was held in a hangar on the day before their departure for the front. Everyone had a grand time, with the exception of one young ensign whose countenance was extremely gloomy. He was observed by the Commander, who later called the ensign into his room and asked him whether he were ill or if anything were the matter. To this the ensign replied: "Since I have been asked so kindly, I feel it my duty to reply candidly. I cannot help but feel miserable and disgusted today."

"But why? All the rest of you are in high spirits and thrilled at being able to proceed to the front for active service. How is it that you alone are so depressed?"

"I have been trained for several months now at this Kasumiga-ura corps, and I have exerted my might and main, cherishing a single desire: to start knocking down American airplanes the day following the conclusion of my training at Kasumiga-ura. But now I have been assigned to a reconnoitering plane, with which I cannot knock out American planes. I had hoped very much to be assigned to

a better plane, and that is why I am so unhappy and distressed."

The Commander then said: "That's too bad, but not everybody can be assigned to fighting planes. Since you are young, you must gain experience with reconnoitering machines, mine-laying planes, bombers, pursuit planes, etc. Later you will be promoted to the head of a group, commander of an aerial unit, commander of an aerial battle unit, and so on, when you will find the actual flying experience—gained while young—useful and important. Think of that and don't make yourself so unhappy."

But the young ensign did not appear to be at all convinced by this lecture. His commanding officer felt slightly vexed and asked: "Don't you understand yet?

After great hesitation, the ensign replied: "I am not going to argue with you at all, sir. But may I ask you, sir, if you think I shall live that long?" This last remark so moved the commanding officer that he could only nod his assent.

* * *

The episode ends here; but that Commander later said that all the officers and men under training at Kasumiga-ura are of the same caliber as this young ensign. They do their utmost in their training with the one hope of knocking down American airplanes beginning with the day after their graduation. They expect to be killed at any time and, therefore, they never think of accumulating experience to be used later when promoted to higher ranks. Nor do they even think of being promoted to higher ranks in future times. They only think of knocking down the enemy confronting them. They are beyond life and death, aflame with the spirit of patriotism.

This is not only the case with the officers and men of the air force but holds good for every officer and man of the Imperial Japanese Forces. The mental state they have attained is such that they do not think of future promotions: their one idea is to defeat their enemy. Their utmost endeavors may eventually get them either decorated with the Order of the Golden Kite or enshrined at the Yasukuni Shrine; but such results are nothing but potential, and never their aim. The only thing they desire to accomplish is the fulfillment of their mission.

I would like to see the youth of Japan never become businessmen only for the purpose of enriching themselves, nor ever become soldiers for the sake of being general one day, nor ever join the civil service to be appointed minister: instead I would have everyone do his or her very best at the job on hand, no matter whether engaged in agriculture or working in factories. This is the only way to win this war. I believe that all Japanese young people are actually living their lives in this spirit. Not only the youth of Japan but every member of the Japanese race, in full knowledge of the character of his country—superior to that of any other country of the world and with a spirit unique in the world—must consider himself to have been placed in a battle position and must do his utmost in the work in which he is engaged. I firmly believe that by this means the war cannot fail to be won.

It is nothing but the striving towards a certain goal that makes life tolerable.

Schiller